

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.6/1993/11
21 January 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Thirty-seventh session
Vienna, 17-26 March 1993
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING
STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Women and children living under apartheid

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 1992/15 of 30 July 1992, entitled "Women and children under apartheid", the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-seventh session a report on the implementation of the above resolution. In view of the lack of updated information on underlying economic and social changes, the report only supplies information considered to be more recent than that presented in the previous report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/1991/8) on the theme.

*E/CN.6/1993/1.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1-5	3
I. LEGAL SITUATION	6-7	3
II. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION	8-16	4
III. ACTION TAKEN BY THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE MEASURES OF ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN LIVING UNDER APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA	17-28	5

INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 1992/15, entitled "Women and children under apartheid", the Economic and Social Council, recognizing "that the equality of women and men cannot be achieved without the success of the struggle towards a united, non-racist, non-sexist and democratic South Africa", requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-seventh session a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned resolution.
2. The Commission on the Status of Women, at its thirty-fifth session, had discussed a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/1991/8), prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/13, concerning the implementation and monitoring of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women 1/ in relation to women and children living under apartheid.
3. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1991/20 of 30 May 1991 entitled "Women and children under apartheid", did not request that a report be prepared, although it did decide that the Commission on the Status of Women should remain seized of the issue.
4. The situation of women in a post-apartheid society is one of the most important issues currently under discussion. In his report to the Security Council on the question of South Africa (S/25004) of 22 December 1992, the Secretary-General stated that:

"One aspect of democratization which should not be overlooked is the need to bring the country's women into the political process as full partners. Political violence, intimidation, poverty and dislocation of families and communities are among the factors currently preventing their full participation. Future democracy, reconciliation and development in South Africa cannot take place without the contribution of all its people." (S/25004, para. 86)

5. The present report describes briefly legal, social and economic developments, conditions and actions taken by United Nations organizations and the international community to provide measures of assistance to women and children under apartheid since the presentation of the last report. It is based largely on the information gathered from bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations dealing with the issue of apartheid, as well as information obtained from published reports.

I. LEGAL SITUATION

6. The Government of South Africa signed the following treaties on 29 January 1993: the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (General Assembly resolution 640 (VII), annex); the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (General Assembly resolution 1040 (XI), annex); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex); the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (General Assembly resolution 39/46 annex); and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex).

7. The Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (General Assembly resolution 1763 A (XVII), annex) was also acceded to by the Government of South Africa on the same date.

II. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

8. Women in South Africa continue to be subject to double discrimination on the basis of both race and gender. Women are discriminated against because of their racial and ethnic origins, and are further disadvantaged by living in a male-dominated and patriarchal society.

9. The practice of apartheid has confined the majority of women to impoverished homelands, with limited opportunities for employment and income-generation activities. The situation of women in urban areas is only marginally better. Largely because of their limited education and training, which stems from the cumulative effects of past and present racial discrimination in education and training, these women tend to be concentrated in unskilled and semi-skilled positions in the informal sector, which falls outside the purview of any labour legislation, and are thus the victims of considerable exploitation in terms of salary and working conditions.

10. South African women are subject to gender differentiation by type of job and level of occupation, as well as by type of occupation. The official statistics, 2/ which did not cover the bantustans, indicated that black women accounted for 36 per cent of the economically active population in 1990 and that their level of unemployment was almost double that of their male counterparts. Gender differences in types of occupation are evidenced by data indicating that black women are concentrated in the service sector, mainly as domestic assistants, nurses and teachers, but constitute a negligible proportion of the black workers in managerial and professional jobs. In 1989, women workers accounted for 40 per cent of the workers in managerial and executive jobs. If, however, the nursing and teaching positions are excluded, this figure falls to 19 per cent for all women and to only 2.6 per cent for black women. The proportion of middle-level occupations held by all women was 37 per cent in 1989, of which black women accounted for only 6.1 per cent. Black men tended to be predominately employed in mining, transport and construction, and in other skilled and semi-skilled occupations. This occupation segregation based on gender and race therefore significantly contributes to the wide discrepancy in wages among the different racial groups, as well as among the sexes within the different racial and ethnic groups.

11. Despite the allocation in the last budget of the Government of South Africa of increased funds to social services for the black population, substantial disparities remain in the different services available to the different racial groups. 3/

12. Disparities also persist in the Government's expenditure on education; although overall spending on education is to increase by 24 per cent in 1992-1993 and most of this increase is earmarked for the education of black children, the Government still devotes 35 per cent of its global education expenditure to white children. 4/ The crisis of black education has reached alarming proportions. It is estimated that one and a half million children of school-going age are not attending school. 5/ The crisis is affected by a severe shortage of basic materials and qualified teachers. 6/ In response to

the calls of the different organizations and parties for a unitary, non-racial system of education, the Government announced, in February 1992, further reforms whereby most white schools would opt for a semi-private status: the Government would be responsible only for teachers' salaries, while students' parents would finance maintenance and general administrative costs. Many South Africans have denounced this trend towards privatization as a new attempt at segregation. 7/ Children have also been exploited as agricultural labourers. 8/ Furthermore, children's education is adversely affected because they are sometimes forced to work during school hours particularly as agricultural labourers and in the informal sector in the urban areas and townships.

13. The stated intention of the Government since 1990 on the provision of primary health care has yet to result in an improvement in the health conditions of the majority of South Africans. 9/ Faced with a serious shortage of funds and the continued de facto segregation of most medical facilities, South Africa's social indicators, such as infant mortality rates, continue to rise, while nutritional problems worsen. 10/

14. Poverty is widespread among the majority of South African families. As many as 2.5 million South Africans cannot afford to pay for basic nutritional needs. 11/ Operation Hunger estimates that only 8 per cent of the rural black population are self-sufficient, while the majority rely on remittances from relatives working in the cities. 12/

15. Political violence has had - and continues to have - a significant negative impact on the physical and psychological well-being of all South Africans, particularly children. The violence has reached unprecedented and dramatic levels in the past two years. 13/ Two years after the repeal of the major apartheid laws, the impact of political changes, therefore, has not yet resulted in better living conditions for the majority of South Africans.

16. It should be borne in mind that even in a new, democratic and non-racial South Africa, the legacies of apartheid will not disappear overnight. It is hoped that a new constitution for a non-racial and democratic South Africa will lay the foundation for the emancipation of all South African women, which will be essential for building a new society.

III. ACTION TAKEN BY THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE MEASURES OF ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN LIVING UNDER APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

17. International concern with providing assistance to women living under apartheid is reflected in several United Nations declarations and resolutions. In its resolution 1992/15 of 30 July 1992, entitled "Women and children under apartheid", the Economic and Social Council appealed to "all countries and United Nations bodies, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 46/79 and in consultation with liberation movements, to increase their support for educational, health, vocational training and employment opportunities for women and children living under apartheid". It also requested "the Centre against Apartheid to widen and strengthen its cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women, with a view to creating specific programmes of assistance to South African women to enable them to participate fully in the process of transition of their country towards a non-racist democracy".

18. The resolve of the States Members of the United Nations to eradicate apartheid, including its negative consequences on women and children, is evidenced by the unanimous adoption by the General Assembly, in its resolution S-16/1 of 14 December 1989, of the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa as well as subsequent resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

19. The Secretary-General announced on 9 September 1992 his decision to deploy a United Nations observer mission in South Africa in implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 772 (1992). The Director of the Staff Administration and Training Division, Office of Human Resources Management, was appointed Chief of this mission. She took up her post on 23 September 1992. The mission's current deployment is weighted towards the Witwatersrand/Vaal and Natal/KwaZulu regions, where 70 per cent of the political violence occurs. 14/

20. The Secretary-General, in his report to the Security Council on the question of South Africa (S/25004) of 22 December 1992, strongly urged that special attention be given to the problem of violence and intimidation directed at women from a variety of sources, "especially in view of the crucial role women can play in maintaining cohesion and stability in their communities". 15/

21. At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly took note of the third progress report of the Secretary-General (A/47/574) on the implementation of the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa (General Assembly resolution S-16/1, annex), as well as the report of the Secretary-General on the coordinated approach by the United Nations system on questions relating to South Africa (A/47/559).

22. United Nations organs and specialized agencies have continued to monitor the evolving process in South Africa. A brief description of selected activities of some of these bodies is given below.

23. In 1991 and 1992, the Centre Against Apartheid of the Secretariat organized a number of conferences, round tables, seminars and consultations. These activities were undertaken in accordance with the programme of work of the Special Committee against Apartheid, as well as in cooperation with a number of non-governmental organizations and individuals involved in the current developments in South Africa.

24. Between November and December 1991, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) funded a mission to South Africa to meet with women leaders of anti-apartheid organizations in Cape Town. The primary objective of the mission was to explore, at a grass-roots level, the issues and problems facing women at present and ways in which those issues could be successfully linked with the public policy debates currently taking place in South Africa. The project has resulted in plans to work with a number of women's organization based in South Africa to develop a suitable training model and materials that will help women to participate in public policy-making and development education.

25. The United Nations Population Fund sent a mission to South Africa to undertake a preliminary assessment of local activities and major actors in the population sector and of the potential to address future needs. The report of the Secretary-General (A/47/559) provides an extensive account of the status of population policies and activities in South Africa.

26. In December 1992, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) joined the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in South Africa - which has been carrying out organized voluntary repatriation and reintegration of South African refugees and exiles since 1991 - to assist in the reintegration of returnees, particularly women and children. UNICEF is facilitating the planning and implementation of a more systematic approach to the children's rights campaign, the translation into four major local languages of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Facts of Life booklet and their dissemination.

27. The Report of the Fact-Finding and Conciliation Commission on Freedom of Association concerning the Republic of South Africa (E/1992/70, annex), established by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), was noted by the Governing Body of ILO at its 253rd session in May 1992 and transmitted to the Economic and Social Council, which considered it at its substantive session in July 1992. The Council, *inter alia*, in its resolution 1992/12, requested the Secretary-General to invite the Government of South Africa to report, no later than 31 December 1992, on the measures that it had taken to give effect to the recommendations contained in the report, and thereafter at yearly intervals until the Council was satisfied that the recommendations had been implemented.

28. Other United Nations bodies as well as specialized agencies have also taken a coordinated approach to questions relating to South Africa. A detailed description of ongoing or planned activities of the United Nations system to assist women and children living under apartheid is given in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General on the coordinated approach by the United Nations system on questions relating to South Africa (A/47/559).

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ Special Report of the Director-General on the Application of the Declaration concerning Action Against Apartheid in South Africa submitted to the International Labour Conference at its 79th session, 1992. See also "Human rights questions: allegations regarding infringements of trade union rights-Note by the Secretary-General" (E/1992/70), annex.

3/ Financial Times, 5 June 1992.

4/ Financial Mail (Johannesburg), 22 May 1992.

5/ Business Day (Johannesburg), 3 October 1991.

6/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 22 (A/47/22), chap. III, para. 78.

7/ The Star (Johannesburg), 3 June 1992.

8/ The Star (Johannesburg), 6 March 1991.

9/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 22 (A/47/22), chap. III, para. 79.

10/ South African Institute of Race Relations, Race Relations Survey, 1991/1992.

11/ The Citizen (Johannesburg), 6 March 1992.

12/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh session, Supplement No. 22 (A/47/22), chap. III, para. 76.

13/ Ibid., para. 18.

14/ See the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the question of South Africa (S/25004), sect. II, paras. 47-48.

15/ Ibid., sect. IV, para. 86.